

***NORTH PROVIDENCE PRIMARY CARE ASSOC. INC.
DR. ANTHONY G. FARINA JR.
INTERNAL MEDICINE***

***Colon Cancer.....
If Detected Early Enough Can be Curable***

Colorectal cancer accounts for the third most common malignancy, resulting in 60,000 deaths in the US per year. This disease affects males and females equally and is commonly found between the ages of 60-80. Risk factors for development of colorectal cancer include a diet high in fat and low in fiber, excess alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, sedentary life style and a family history of colon cancer.

Despite all the above, colorectal cancer is one of the few curable cancers if found early enough. This can be accomplished through routine screening. The two instruments used in detecting colon cancer, are the sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy. The sigmoidoscopy is used to evaluate the lower portion of the colon and the colonoscopy is used to visualize the entire colon. Both instruments can be used to diagnose and treat the biopsy at the same time of the procedure. For these tolls to be accurate, cooperation is needed by the patient to cleanse the surface of the colon with a bowel preparation. Sigmoidoscopy, being less invasive, can be performed in an office setting; whereas, colonoscopy is performed as an outpatient in a hospital setting.

It is recommended that for people with no symptoms or risk factors screening should begin at age 50 and include three stool slides for blood per year and a sigmoidoscopy every 5 years. It is also recommended that a patient after age 50 have a colonoscopy every 10 years. Screening for patients with risk factors of a family history of parents or siblings with polyps or colon cancer, should begin at the age of 40 and include colonoscopy every 5 years. Patients who have a precancerous polyp identified should have a repeat colonoscopy in 3 years and then again in 5 years.

Ask your doctor today if you should be screened.

Written by Dr. Anthony G. Farina Jr.